

conscientious Romanist could hardly complain if Parliament took the precaution of declaring the absolute sovereignty of the queen of England within her own dominions. To recognise the jurisdiction of any foreign prince or potentate was incompatible with the independence of the realm, as well as with the sovereignty of the queen. Protestantism once established, there could be no room, in the circumstances in which Elizabeth was placed, for the official recognition of the ecclesiastical primacy of the pope within the English dominions. The Romanist might reply that belief in the primacy of Peter's successor did not necessarily imply any lack of allegiance to his sovereign. But in an age in which allegiance to the pope involved active antagonism to heresy it was difficult, if not impossible, for even the patriotic Romanist to act up to his profession, and in any case allegiance to Rome had at this period a political bearing which it was impossible for Elizabeth and her Parliament to ignore with safety. Suppose the pope excommunicated the queen, which he ultimately did, how could any Englishman, who recognised his right to do so, consistently or honestly pose as a loyal subject? That the pope would sooner or later place under his ban the sovereign, who remained an obstinate Protestant, was a certainty. On political grounds, therefore, Elizabeth and her Parliament, having deliberately chosen to remain Protestant, had no alternative but to disown the papal jurisdiction, and debar all subjects from acknowledging it under penalty of high treason. To respect the liberty of the subject in this matter would have been to encourage rebellion on behalf of a foreign potentate, and would have been both suicidal and imbecile. On the other hand, the conscientious Catholic, like the conscientious Puritan, had ample reason to object to the Act of Uniformity as needlessly tyrannic. To compel men to go to church under penalty of censure and fine was to make them either hypocrites or rebels. The conscientious Catholic might well have been allowed to stay at home and repeat his paternoster, without incurring the charge of irreligion or treachery to the constitution. He might reasonably claim the right to adhere to his religious convictions as long as he did and said nothing" against the queen's supremacy. But neither Romanist nor Protestant in this